

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee
Hearing on Greening the Senate – June 18, 2008

Good morning. I would like to welcome our witnesses.

We are here today to discuss ways in which the Senate community has reduced energy usage in Capitol complex and explore options to make the Capitol even greener.

Global warming is no longer a distant threat. It's here, it's happening and its effects are real. We're seeing increasingly volatile weather patterns. Warmer temperatures. Species are beginning to disappear. And out West where I'm from, water supplies are becoming increasingly limited.

Congress has a responsibility and the opportunity to lead the nation in reducing the factors that contribute to global warming. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, I am committed to establishing programs that reduce greenhouse gases and promote energy efficiency.

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires that the Capitol Complex reduce energy consumption 30 percent by 2015. This mandate does not come without challenges.

We must continue to find greening projects that make good use of federal tax dollars. And we must also weigh the importance of implementing environmentally sustainable initiatives against other pressing maintenance issues around the Capitol campus.

The Architect of the Capitol currently faces a \$1.4 billion maintenance backlog. These projects must not be set aside for the sole purpose of greening the Capitol. It is my belief that we can and we must be both good stewards to our Capitol campus, as well as caretakers of our environment.

There are inherent obstacles in working with greening old and historic buildings. For example, this Russell Senate Building will be 100 years old next year. How do we find ways to preserve this building while still decreasing our energy consumption?

The Senate is currently benefiting from a number of energy reduction projects. These include:

- A robust recycling program that incorporates 12 different materials and produced 902 tons of recycled goods annually.
- A comprehensive light bulb replacement program that has switched 99% of all light bulbs in public spaces to low wattage compact florescent bulbs saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy usage and saved Over 900 tons of CO2 emissions

- Installing water reduction flush units in the Dirksen and Hart Buildings that reduce water usage per flush by 30 percent.
- In May of 2007 I directed the Senate Sergeant at Arms to purchase only Energy Star rated equipment for all information technology needs. This initiative has resulted in the usage of over 3,300 new Energy Star Computers.
- In January of 2008 I directed the Architect of the Capitol to require Energy Star rated vending machines throughout the Senate. Currently there are over 70 Energy Star units in usage.

I understand that the Acting Architect in his opening remarks will address other energy-saving projects that the Senate has implemented.

While we have come a long way toward achieving our sustainability goals, there is still much more that can be done.

One avenue for change is altering the fuel mixture at the Capitol Power Plant. According to the GAO, 32 percent of all greenhouse gasses produced by the Legislative branch come from Capitol Power Plant operations. Right now, the Capitol Power Plant uses a mixture of coal, natural gas, and oil to produce steam and chilled water to 23 different buildings, including the Senate buildings.

This morning I intend to ask Stephen Ayers, the Acting Architect of the Capitol, to look into the whether we could reduce Senate greenhouse gas emissions at the Capitol Power Plant by changing the fuel mixture used. I look forward to hearing his recommendations.

Another avenue for change is educating the Senate community on how simple actions can make a big difference in lowering our energy usage. Creating a culture of “energy consumption awareness” through educational seminars and emails might hold the key to further reduce our energy needs.

I know we all share a common commitment to create and implement creative ways to reduce our energy usage. I look forward to hearing the testimony of our panel of witnesses and reviewing their recommendations for action.

And now, I’d like to turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Bennett, for his remarks.